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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Central Intelligence Bulletin

Secret

Nº 41

9 November 1972

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Approved For Release 2003/07/29 : CIA-RDP79T00975A023100110001-2

Approved For Release 2003/07/29 : CIA-RDP79T00975A023100110001-2

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No. 0269/72
9 November 1972

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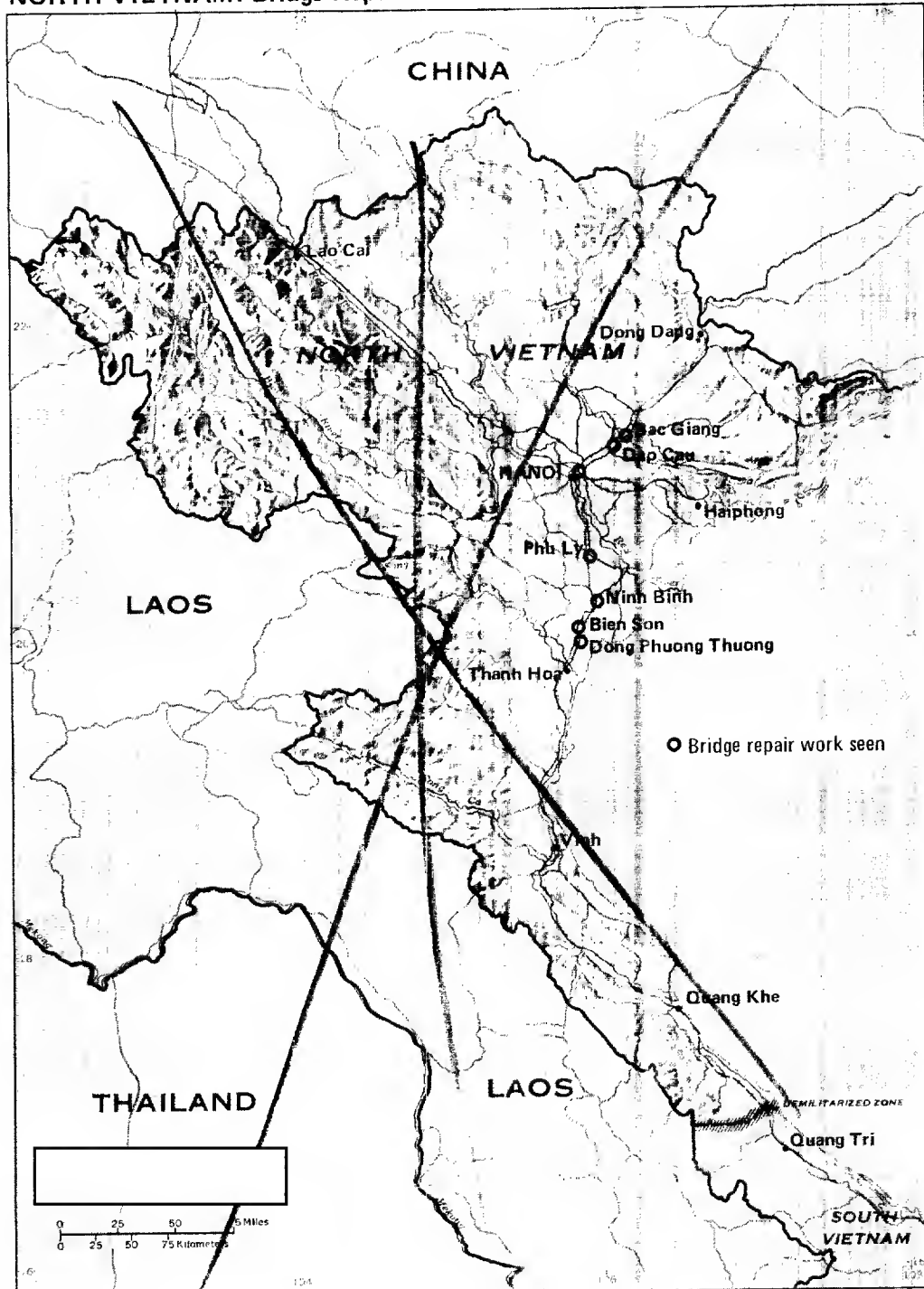
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NORTH VIETNAM: Bridge Repairs



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NORTH VIETNAM: The North Vietnamese have taken advantage of the restrictions on bombing north of the 20th Parallel to repair the vital northeast rail line. Except for a small segment just north of Hanoi, this line is open. Repairs are also being made on the line from Hanoi to Thanh Hoa. Aerial photography [] shows that the missing center span of the Dap Cau rail bridge has been replaced and a bypass near the Bac Giang Bridge has been repaired. The Canal des Rapides and the Paul Doumer bridges at Hanoi are being repaired, but both bridges require major reconstruction before they can reopen for rail traffic.

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By early November, the North Vietnamese had repaired two of the four unserviceable crossings on the rail line south of Hanoi, and the other two are under repair. The Bien Son rail bridge has been rebuilt and a new rail pontoon bridge has been constructed at Ninh Binh. In addition, some of the downed spans have been replaced on the bridges at Phu Ly and Dong Phuong Thuong. No repair activities have been noted at the Thanh Hoa bridge, probably because it is located below the 20th Parallel. []

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ARGENTINA: The Lanusse government, like the Peronist leaders, appears to be making preparations for the return of Juan Peron.

Only hours after Hector Campora, Peron's personal representative in Argentina, announced last Tuesday that the 77-year-old former president would return to his homeland on 17 November, Lanusse told the nation that the armed forces would guarantee Peron's personal safety and deal with any threats to domestic peace by either pro- or anti-Peronists. Lanusse said that he had earlier doubted that Peron would ever return but gave clear indications that he now expects him to come.

Peron has said before that he would return, once even coming as far as Brazil before being turned back, and this announcement may be no more than another attempt to throw the opposition off balance and to pressure President Lanusse into agreeing to Peron's demands. It seems more likely, however, that this time Peron has recognized that he must return or face a serious loss of prestige.

Most speculation in recent weeks has been that if Peron returns it will be for only a few days and for the purpose of personally endorsing an electoral accord with the military. The short lead time on Campora's announcement and the tenor of Lanusse's speech indicate that the Peronists and the government may be very close to an agreement on the conduct of the national elections next March and on the orientation of the government that will take power in May. It is uncertain whether agreement on a presidential ticket will be part of such an accord or whether the problem of finding an acceptable candidate will be worked out later. [REDACTED]

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YUGOSLAVIA: Tito's popular prestige--his trump card in past disputes--has suffered because of serious doubts about his tough drive to strengthen party rule.

Although unanimous support for Tito is being voiced at party meetings, he has suffered several important embarrassments. In addition to the resignation of Foreign Minister Tepavac, Tito has had to accept the resignation of Koca Popovic, a member of the collective presidency, long-time Tito confidant, and a popular figure in Serbia. Popovic's action is clearly intended as a protest against Tito's campaign to combat centrifugal forces in regional party organizations by recentralizing party authority. Popovic's departure is likely to create more doubts about the wisdom of Tito's course. Grumbling in the regime has penetrated to the lower levels, where a few Serb critics have even voiced regret over the fact that the 80-year-old leader is in such good health.

Most Yugoslavs still revere Tito as the man who pulled them through World War II and the subsequent break with Stalin. His design for tighter central control, however, comes as a rude shock, and the growing middle class particularly fears some aspects of his economic program. Tito's inflated rhetoric about "illegally acquired wealth" has already caused some landlords to evict tenants rather than face charges of amassing "unearned" wealth. During a speech to factory workers in Macedonia on 6 November, Tito tried to allay worker fears that their "earned wealth" would be confiscated, but he again demanded moves against various traders, merchants, bankers, and speculators.

Tito has taken a calculated risk in advocating these new programs, and he thinks he can ride out dissatisfaction. Thus far, he is sticking firmly to the outlines he has set, and has let it be known that he will not be swayed either by grumbling at home or by "distorted" press coverage abroad.

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The purge in Serbia is now spreading to the public information media. The chief editors of three major newspapers and the head of the state television network have been sacked. Once the media are brought into line, Tito may turn his attention to the remaining supporters of ex-party boss Nikezic.

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NOTES

UGANDA: President Amin's deadline for the departure of non-citizen Asians passed yesterday apparently without major incidents, and almost all non-citizen Asians were evacuated. About 1,500 stateless Asians remain, however, along with a few thousand Asians with Ugandan citizenship and those exempted from expulsion because of their much-needed technical skills. The UN has set up departure centers in Kampala for the remaining stateless Asians and will try to move them to facilities in Europe and elsewhere by the end of the week. Amin has also attempted to hasten the departure of Asians with Ugandan citizenship by ordering them to relocate in rural areas where they will be permitted to engage in little more than subsistence agriculture. As long as Asians remain in Uganda, they will face harassment, such as Amin's order for a head count today, or more unpleasant incidents at the hands of the army, now on full alert. [REDACTED]

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PAKISTAN: On 7 November, Islamabad recognized Hanoi, it will recognize Pyongyang today, and may be considering early recognition of Sihanouk's "Royal Government of National Union." Yesterday, the Pakistanis began the formalities for withdrawing from SEATO. President Bhutto apparently made these long contemplated moves for several reasons. He wants to increase Pakistan's contacts with other Asian nations, he wishes to improve relations further with Peking, and he needs to counter criticism by the left wing of his political party that his foreign policy is too pro-American. [REDACTED]

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MALAGASY REPUBLIC - CHINA: Diplomatic relations were established with China on 6 November during Foreign Minister Ratsiraka's visit to Peking. The move is the latest step by the six-month-old government of General Ramanantsoa in the redirection of Malagasy's foreign policy, including broadening relations with Communist countries. Diplomatic relations were established with the Soviet Union in September. The government apparently views relations with Communist countries as a means of expanding Malagasy's trade and aid resources, strengthening its nonaligned credentials, and balancing its close ties with the West. The government, however, would prefer avoiding the establishment of large Communist diplomatic or aid missions on the island.



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